

## PART VII

### *Perspectives from the Field: Survey Results from Sheriffs, Recent Studies of Orange and Sarasota Counties, and a Recent Miami-Dade County Grand Jury Report*

In 1999, a survey of mental health services and procedures was conducted by the Louis de la Parte Mental Health Institute of the University of South Florida in each Florida jail with the assistance of DCF District Forensic Specialist. Initially, LCIR staff planned to perform a similar five-year follow-up survey for this review. However, four hurricanes then hit Florida in the summer of 2004 and these plans were curtailed because of county and DCF workload disruptions. Instead, a modified survey was sent to each Sheriff through the Florida Sheriffs Association. The original survey was sent out on September 30, 2004 and a follow-up request was sent on October 25, 2004. Twenty responses have been received to date from large, medium and small counties. Sometimes survey respondents did not answer all the questions or gave multiple responses to a question. Also, each Sheriff's Office that responded relied on several different individuals to complete the survey. The information provided through the LCIR survey of the Sheriff's office is supplemented by recent studies related to the community mental health systems in Orange and Sarasota counties and a recent Miami-Dade County Grand Jury Report.

The survey was designed to examine the processes, costs, and challenges relating to individuals with mental health problems that come in contact with the county jail system. The survey questions were formulated to augment information collected at the state level on the impact of the mentally ill on county jails. This survey does not include questions on pre-arrest (Crisis Intervention Teams) and post-arrest (Mental Health Courts) diversion programs that are known to exist in certain jurisdictions.

The questionnaire was organized in five sections (A- E). The sections include:

- A. Baker Act Transportation Costs (Sheriff's Office and Jail)
- B. Utilization of Florida Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) Programs
- C. Challenges and Recommendations (opinions)
- D. Potential Impact of Recent Baker Act Legislation (Ch. 2004-385, L.O.F. also known as SB 700)
- E. Additional Comments

#### ***A. Baker Act Transportation Costs***

Respondents from 17 county Sheriffs' offices provided enough fiscal information on Baker Act transportation costs to calculate cost per trip to a Baker Act receiving facility such as a Crisis Stabilization Unit. A Crisis Stabilization Unit provides secure residential short-term acute care mental health services 24 hours a day seven days a week. The responses indicate that in the more rural counties without nearby receiving facilities, costs per trip were much higher than areas with nearby receiving facilities.

The respondent from Taylor County reported that Baker Act transportation costs per trip averaged \$125 in fiscal years ending September 30, 2003 and 2004. At the other end of the cost spectrum was Palm Beach County, reporting \$20 per trip in 2003 and \$19 per trip in 2004. Ten Sheriffs' offices reported accounting for these costs in the Sheriff's general operating budget,